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AN

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE

The Suffolk Masonic Society,

ON THE CELEBRATION OF THEIR

THIRD ANNIVERSARY,

AT MASONS' HALL,

MAY 22, A. L. 5823.

BY JEROME V. C. SMITH, M. D.

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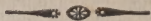
R. W. BROTHER SMITH,

The undersigned, in behalf of the *Suffolk Masonic Society*, present you their thanks for the eloquent and ingenious address delivered at the celebration of their third anniversary, at Masons' Hall, on Thursday evening, 22d May inst. and request a copy for the press.

With every sentiment of esteem and respect,

We are your obedient servants,

GEORGE T. HAWES,
WM. Mc CLENNEN, JR. } Committee.
GILBERT NURSE,



BOSTON, MAY 27, A. L. 5823.

GENTLEMEN,

The address which I had the honour of delivering before the *Suffolk Masonic Society*, you will recollect was extemporary; but relying on the strength of my memory, and being happy to gratify the wishes of the fraternity, it is at your disposal.

Obediently, gentlemen, yours.

JEROME V. C. SMITH.

RECEIVED
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ADDRESS.

BRETHREN,

IT is not because we are solicitous to ingratiate ourselves in your esteem, beyond the boundaries of merit, that we have been induced to give a public exhibition of our masonic acquirements.

It is not because we are vainly conscious of having improved ourselves in the elementary principles of the order, that you are invited, to gratify a childish ambition which we have not had the sense to discover. It is not, because a womanish pride, weak as the gentle sex with whom it is found, prompts us to trumpet those sage like maxims, that give an assurance, that to learn to be silent, is learning to be wise. It is not because we have a wish to inculcate a belief in the enquiring minds of the newly initiated, that the explanatory lectures of the sublime changes through which they have passed, in gaining admission to the hallowed abodes of friendship, are beyond their comprehension. It is not because we love to mortify the less informed,

by a brilliant display of knowledge, which they have had no opportunity of acquiring. It is not because we are an associated band of office mongers, plotting for a dignity that only becomes the virtuously experienced.

It is not because we have hoped to astonish you with latent abilities, nor surprise this honourable assembly with a superior intellectual display.

No ;—it is the highest ambition of this society, to impress your minds with the fact, that we endeavour to be masons in principle, masons in conduct, and that we feel morally responsible to the Architect of unnumbered worlds, for every deviation from that wholesome constitution we have individually sworn to observe. It is to convince you that we have not been inattentive to the rational source of intellectual delight, your ballot has given us ;—that we have not only studiously aimed at the improvement of ourselves, but have had the general good of the great masonic family continually at heart.

By your indulgence, we have been welcomed on that mosaic pavement, that has taught this important truth, that life, like the scenery of a play house, is rapidly changing ;—now prosperously floating, on the gentle waves of a summer's sea—now, struggling for that liberty, which the meanest reptile quietly enjoys. We love to contemplate the beautiful simplicity of those emblems that illustrate the peculiar varieties of fortune, and teach to feel, as

beings who boast they have a soul, had ever ought to feel,—another's woe.

You gave us the pass to a higher apartment in that sacred edifice, dedicated to God, religion, and science.—The corn, the wine and the oil have been measured for the wages of the industrious,—and we have learned the mystic allusion of the suspended initial, emitting the dazzling rays of glory. It has taught us how to meditate on the celestial character of Deity;—how to approach the solemn ordinances of his worship;—how to value his parental care;—and the absolute certainty of our momentary dependance on a Supreme Intelligence. While it has taught us that health, plenty and peace, are the consequent results of a well spent life, it has at the same time convinced us, that the only pass-word to realms of eternal felicity, is an unaccusing conscience.

A recital of the tragical death of an illustrious master in Isreal, whose genius and intrinsic goodness were only parallel in his anointed co-adjutor, gives a dignified weight to his memory,—and demonstrates, that the threatenings of corrupt ambition, nor the morbid appetite of curiosity, should never intimidate us to forfeit our accredited and renowned reputation for inviolate faithfulness. The man who yields his honour,—the strongest bond connecting man to man,—or the bloody miscreant, who extorts a broken sentence from a dying voice,

lingers out existence in a terrestrial hell,—and the world stamps him for oblivion. But when the trusty sentinel falls upon the post of duty, guarding in the awful hour of death, the sacred palladium of his rights, a weeping world applauds, and ministering angels convoy his departing spirit to everlasting day.

The stone squarers of Lebanon have not objected to our testimonials. Though obedience is the lesson for minors, it secures the esteem of superiors, when time has ripened the understanding.

In passing that chair, once the station of masonry's dearest advocate, we have felt an honest desire to be prepared to discharge its concomitant duties :—to be in readiness to preside in the orphan family and furnish consolation and charity, to the distressed and bereaved. While travelling the uneven paths of a short existence, it has been our constant care to *mark well* the precipices that endanger the safety of the sojourner.

The impostor's unavoidable fate has given a lasting impression,—and a *new name*, which no one knows but its fortunate recipient, is a treasure that will command bread among the wildest Arabs. While other societies have wrangled among themselves, and overthrown those first principles of order which they have been labouring to establish ;—while nations have perverted the basis of a constitution and execrated the rulers who have been elevat-

ed to consequential authority, we, in humble obedience to the simple pandects of masonry, have cultivated those domestic feelings, that bind us in reciprocal acts of politeness, friendship and grateful esteem. With a cheerfulness only known to those who have acquitted themselves satisfactorily, with a heart felt pleasure we have heard the Most Excellent Master pronounce the accomplishment of his noble design.

No man is to be taken for a good man and true, until his unimpeachable conduct and intercourse, has entitled him to that highly valued appellation. Vice in her thousand varied hues, has a seducing charm for every sense. Passions only constituted to protect, and increase the volume of individual happiness, are but a poor wall to defend those sterling virtues, that alone, can promote a standard usefulness. Masonry cannot exalt the man, who will not reputably exalt himself.

Brethren, we welcome you to this lofty apartment, once the theatre of legislative importance and political enthusiasm ;—but now consecrated to the service of masonry ;—now dedicated to our sovereign Creator and the holy evangelists. Now exclusively set apart for the contemplation of that Omnipotent Architect, whose works—

“ In the vast, and the minute, we see

“ The unambiguous footsteps of the God

“ Who gives its lustre to an insect’s wing,

“ And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.

'Tis nature's God ! the divinity of the conscientious mason's adoration !—

“ Oh nature !—all-sufficient, over all !

“ Enrich us with a knowledge of thy works !

“ Snatch us to heaven, and show thy wonders there ;

“ World beyond world, in infinite extent,

“ Profusely scatter'd o'er the blue immense.

From that altar, acceptable incense has arisen to heaven, and the aspirations of him who has sought for more light, in the harmonious walks of the craft, never returned dissatisfied to his friends ; and if he conformed to the regulations of the fraternity, a worse man to society.

We are an associated company of brothers, from various nations and of different languages, known by the name of the Suffolk Masonic Society. We are without charter, and without funds, but rich in fraternal affections, freely enjoying those liberties of conscience, which masonry has ever guaranteed to her professed votaries. This society is constituted of the young and the aged ;—of men of various religious principles, but so harmoniously united, as to exemplify this antient maxim in the fraternity, that masonry unites men of every sect and opinion.

Men of as many different professions, as there were precious stones in the breast-plate of Aaron, are cordially received, if they possess the true angles of a square, and unsullied name. It is honoured with efficient and valuable members of every

degree of current masonry,—from the valiant knights of the Red Cross, down to the faithful master mason, who has been taught the mystery of spreading that glorious cement that firmly binds, while it does away every hereditary distinction. Our motto is unity ;—our wages the receipts of industry,—and him that carries the mortar, is as conspicuously worthy in the estimation of this society, as that brother who is greeted, right worshipful, in the east.

It is our particular province to instruct the less informed brethren ;—correct their prejudices ;—enlighten their views ;—extend their acquaintance with the economy of masonry, and patronize their talents. To reclaim the vicious members of other societies—practice on the speculative advantages of rectitude, and use our best exertions to imitate those exemplary individuals, who have lived without reproach, and like the setting sun beyond the distant mountain's top, seemed to grow larger at their going down.

If there is any brother present who knows of a bad mason,—one who is alienated from the social virtues—one that abuses himself, neglects his proper avocations—is a busy-body in other people's affairs—a tyrant over an affectionate wife,—a terror to his children, and an unfeeling master,—recommend that man to the Suffolk Masonic Society, and the moment he passes his guarded threshold, he will assuredly be taken by a lion's grip ! Though

it may not be for the purpose of inflicting the just penalties he may have violated,—although it will not be for subjecting him to the tortures of an inquisition for the enormities he may have been guilty of,—but it will be to teach him, that masonry, while it detests the corrupt deviations from her established laws, which are as firm as the twelve everlasting foundations of the temple in the New Jerusalem,—knows how to forgive the penitent ;—how to apprise the brother that slumbers over a precipice ;—how to love every shred in the great mantle of universal charity. Young masons, recently initiated, and old ones, who are either blind to the value of the moral code of masonry, or, wilfully neglect an acquaintance with its salutary influences, are particularly calculated to derive special benefit from the regular discipline here established.

The pursuits which engage the attention of youth are most important, because they exercise a powerful and almost permanent influence on the whole future character. How many young men, possessed not only of promising, but brilliant talents, are lost to themselves, their friends, their country, and the world, by submitting to the tyranny of those passions, created for a nobler purpose, and employing those best of human energies in the swift pursuit of pernicious and forbidden pleasures ! Pleasures that only sting with remorse, and conceal its victim in his mother earth !

If it is important that youth should listen to the conversation of the aged and wise ;—if by general consent, the recitals of sage experience are infallably serviceable to those who are commencing the bewildering journey of life, the sober lesson of masonry on that mind, will give a decision of character, accompanied with a philosophic moderation, that weighs without fraud, and measures by the rule of conscientious justice :—an acquisition that ornaments frail human nature, and meets the approbation of a scrutinizing world.

No man can deliberately investigate the peculiar beauties of masonry, and be an atheist. He must be inattentive to the noblest productions of the Creator, who gazes but indifferently on the green leaves of the forest, or the automatic contrivances of his own frame,—and sees no masonry in it all !

From the first moment of conception, till the complete evolution of a masterly wrought machine, there are a multiplicity of changes continually taking place, that shew the handy work of Him who framed the spangled canopy above. Here are beauties for our admiration and simplicity of mechanism that has confounded the wisest of men ! When the offspring can only be discovered by the magnifying powers of a lens, it shows that it has been truly formed in nature's mould. Though it is apparently but a point, yet there is a heart in active pulsation ; the limbs, merely lines of a darker hue, are modelled

like our own, and the little system, organized with all its miniature vicera, is strengthening into life.

“The light’s first dawn, with trembling eye-lid hails ;
 “With lungs untaught, arrests the balmy gales ;
 “Tries its new tongue, in tones unknown, and hears
 “The strange vibrations with unpracticed ears ;—
 “Seeks with spread hands, the bosom’s velvet orb,
 “With closing lips the milky fount absorbs,
 “And as compress’d the dulcit streams distill,
 “Drinks warmth and fragrance from the living rill :
 “Eyes with mute rapture every waving line,
 “Prints with adoring kiss the paphian shrine,—
 “And learns ere long, the perfect form confest,
 “Ideal beauty from its mother’s breast !”

Is there no masonry in this ? How wonderful are the operations that are continually taking place in each of our bodies, without ever exciting our surprise, or making us conscious of the never ceasing activity of ten thousand tubes, the least possible derangement of which, eminently endanger a terrestrial existence.

On a candid review of this interesting subject, we should be induced to believe, that man lives an infant in knowledge, and dies before he comprehends the philosophy of himself.

Masonry is not only discoverable in the planatory system, and on the surface of the habitable globe,—but the minutest animal that has fallen under the eye of the inquisitive naturalist, gives a gilded volume to masonry. That animal, smaller than we

can conceive, since it cannot be discovered with the naked eye, exhibits the formations of extremities suited to the element in which it lives, conducting to its movements in search of sustenance and society :—and what is still more astonishing, that mite, that *anamulculæ* possesses the faculty of what ! is it reason ? It runs from a foe ; hides behind nothing ;—closes its eyes that it may not realize impending danger ; is agitated at unnatural objects, and shows the influence of those passions that characterise animals that are deemed more noble, merely because they are tangible,—can be seen and be felt. They are actuated by impulses peculiar to higher beings,—for they slay one another in anger ;—fawn over one of their kind, with the purest feelings of attachment, and reciprocate the tender feelings of love—and thus continue the propagation of their species.

Nature is as tenacious of life, as the rational being who acts freely ;—who says I will end this miserable existence, or I will submit to the pleasure of the destinies, and die when I can no longer live ! The oyster imbedded in the rocky fragments of the ocean's bottom, cannot flee at approaching ruin ; but mark ! the God of nature the God of masonry ! has taken the precaution to fix the apparently helpless animal in a proper element, and made its local situation,—indeed, has constituted its gloomy depth and the strong resisting shell that envelopes

the gelid inhabitant within, the fortress of quiet security.

We love that kind of philosophy that has a rationale, nor care to perplex the mind with those obtruse nicities that are satisfactorily proved to be beyond the reach of our poor comprehension. We love that kind of religion that intuitively directs the wandering faculties of man to pay homage to Him, who rides upon the whirlwind and reposes on the clouds. We love masonry because it confirms the certain existence of a Great first cause—elevates the soul of man to the contemplation of the Majesty of heaven, and leads us to believe that life is not the effect of chance, nor, death an arbitrary condemnation.

We cultivate masonry because it abounds with so many acknowledged truths, that, while it defends every avenue to scepticism, it delicately protects the heart from the cold indifference of atheistical misanthropy. We cherish a fond predilection for its antient principles because they are divinely true, and absolutely prove, that the various productions of nature were created by an All Powerful Arm,—and however simple they may appear to the volatile and inconsiderate, they cannot be imitated nor put in motion by the processes of art, even when aided by the most refined subtleties of human genius !

We honour masonry because it confirms the heart in a physical belief, that the arm that wields the

mighty warrior's sword, the tongue that cries to an empire, liberty or death—the head of a monarch, and the crippled beggar, that weeps for a crumb at the door, have no difference in organization.

The fair charmer who boasts of being the loveliest work of God, and the humble wench, black as the threatening clouds of heaven, groaning under the accumulated weights of slavery and want, were made by the same pattern of vital excellency.

We honour masonry because it positively inculcates this sublime truth ; that

The pomp of greatness, when most excellent,
Is but a bubble : a transitory nothing,
That, like the meridian sun does glare
Upon the eye-balls of the world, to vex
Them with its brightness.

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